

ANNUAL REPORT



2022



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ABSTRACT

Black youth experience social, economic, and health inequities in Canada, and are less likely to attain post-secondary qualifications. Black-focused education can improve economic outcomes for Black youth. Strong evidence indicates mentorship is effective across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of youth development. The Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program (BYMLP) used a participatory approach aimed at improving community belonging and leadership skills as well as fostering a positive cultural identity for Black youth. A total of 23 youths were admitted to the program, with 2 youths participating remotely. The program activities took place between July 5 and August 26, 2022. The youths were selected through a competitive process comprising several application documents: a one-page essay explaining why they wanted to participate in the program, their high school transcript, and an application form. The 2022 BYMLP received funding from Canada Summer Jobs and the AI4 Society.

The logo for AI4 Society, featuring the text "AI4 Society" in a stylized yellow font on a dark green rectangular background.

Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

CANADA SUMMER JOBS

PROJECT TEAM

Project Lead

Dr. Bukola Salami, Professor, Faculty of Nursing

Faculty

Dr. Jennifer Kelly, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education, Educational Policy Studies

Dr. Sedami Gnidehou, Associate Professor, Campus Saint-Jean-Academic Support

Dr. Andy Knight, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept

Dr. Bukola Salami, Professor, Faculty of Nursing

Dr. Shirley Anne Tate, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Sociology Dept

Dr. Jared Wesley, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept

Dr. Linda Gorim, Assistant Professor & WGRF Chair in Cropping Systems, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Ag, Food & Nutri Sci Dept

Advisory Committee

Yar Anyieth, University of Alberta Student and Black Youth

Thomas Bankole, Yoruba Cultural Association of Edmonton, Parent of an alumnus of the Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program

Jewel Chidiebere, An alumnus of the Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program

Lisa Dublin, Optimum Success Strategies

Joseph Luri, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and South Sudanese Association

Adedayo Ojeleye, Nigerian Canadian Association of Edmonton

Sohaib Omar, an alumnus of the Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program

Andrew Parker, Black Teachers Association of Alberta

Joy Eilane Thomas, Vice President of The National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC)

Project Personnel

Dr. Myra Kandemiri, Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello, Research Assistant

PRESENTERS

David Shepherd, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Dr. Helen Vallianatos, Vice-Provost/Dean of Students, Student Services - Dean of Students Administration

Bukola (Oladunni) Salami, Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta

Joseph Luri, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and South Sudanese Association

Sandra Muchekeza, Senior Manager, Program Development and Accountability, Africa Centre

Alexis Andres, Training Support Analyst, Faculty of Nursing, Academic Planning and Undergraduate Program

Dr. Sedami Gnidehou, Associate Professor, Campus Saint-Jean - Academic Support

Dr. Andy Knight, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept

Dr. Jared Wesley, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept

Dr. Shirley Anne Tate, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Sociology Dept

Dr. Linda Gorim, Assistant Professor & WGRF Chair in Cropping Systems, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Ag, Food & Nutri Sci Dept

Allison Sivak, Faculty Engagement Librarian, Library and Museums - Faculty Engagement

Lisa Dublin, Optimum Success Strategies

Sandra Dixon, Associate Professor, Education, University of Lethbridge

Dr. Ekuia Amponsah Agyemang, PGY-5 in Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the University of Alberta. Resident President Black Physicians of Canada

Uduak U. Akpan, Senior Licensing Engineer · GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy

Karen Pinkoski, Advisor, Student Services, Office of the Registrar - Student Service Centre

Lindsay Hennessey (Bradbury), Program Coordinator, Student Financial Support at Office of the Registrar, University of Alberta

Lindsay Moores, Financial Support Coordinator, Office of the Registrar - Student Financial Support

Lauren Kimoto, Student Recruiter, Office of the Registrar - Student Recruitment Centre of Expertise, National Recruitment

Amber Henderson, Student Recruiter, Office of the Registrar - Student Recruitment Centre of Expertise, National Recruitment

Mary Olukotun, Graduate Research Assistantship, Faculty of Nursing

Oluwatobiloba Obatusin, Clinical Pharmacist

PRESENTERS

Gift Okwa, Former Vice President of the University of Alberta Black Student's Association

Fisayo Aruleb, Former President of the University of Alberta Black Medicine Students Association

Christian Fotang, Former Vice President External, University of Alberta Students' Union

Dr. Jennifer Kelly, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Stenette Van Den Berg, University of Alberta Writing Center

Brian Wong, RBC On Campus Assistant Branch Manager/Advisor, Royal Bank of Canada

Dr. Maroro Zinyemba, Dean, Faculty of Skills and Foundational Learning NorQuest College

Myra Kandemiri, BYMLP Program Coordinator and Science Educator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello, Research Assistant, University of Alberta



MENTORS

Chinenye Anokwuru, Senior Press Secretary to Children's Services Minister, Government of Alberta

Lilian Kelani, Registered Nurse, Covenant Health

Higinio Fernández-Sánchez, Registered Nurse and Ph.D. scholar at the University of Alberta, Faculty of Nursing

Sheila Obi, Engineer, Capital Power Corporation

Jodi-Ann Robinson-Perry, Occupational health nurse, All Weather Windows (Lead Occupational Health Nurse)

Dianna Fondo, Public Health Specialist, Alberta Health Services

Chioma Dickson, Registered Nurse, Saskatchewan Health Authority

Muna Ali, Registered Nurse and Regional Manager, Primary Care-Vancouver Coastal Region at First Nations Health Authority

Ekua Agyemang, PGY-5 in Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the University of Alberta. Resident President Black Physicians of Canada

Augustine Amakiri, Senior Bioinformatician, ProCogia

Kaira Bai Bintou, Professional Engineer, Analytics and Insights Integration at Nutrien

Tolu Okubote, Clinical Pharmacist, London Drugs

Janice Huber, Professor, Faculty of Education - Elementary Education

Kimberly-rose Francis, Teacher

Maroro Zinyemba, Dean, Faculty of Skills and Foundational Learning NorQuest College

Noel Gore, Software Engineer, Intuit Canada

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Aura Adegbuyi, Architect

Jared Wesley, Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept

Sandra Dixon, Associate Professor, Education, University of Lethbridge

Deng Mapiour, General Surgeon. Fort Saskatchewan Community Hospital

Doug Ndegwa, Engineer Vice President, Spartan Controls

Eleni Stroulia, Professor, Department of Computing Science, University of Alberta

Tekesai Manyande, Family Physician, Calgary

Ifueko Adeghe, Physician

Dan Nkwetta, Engineer, NAIT

Bukola Salami, Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta

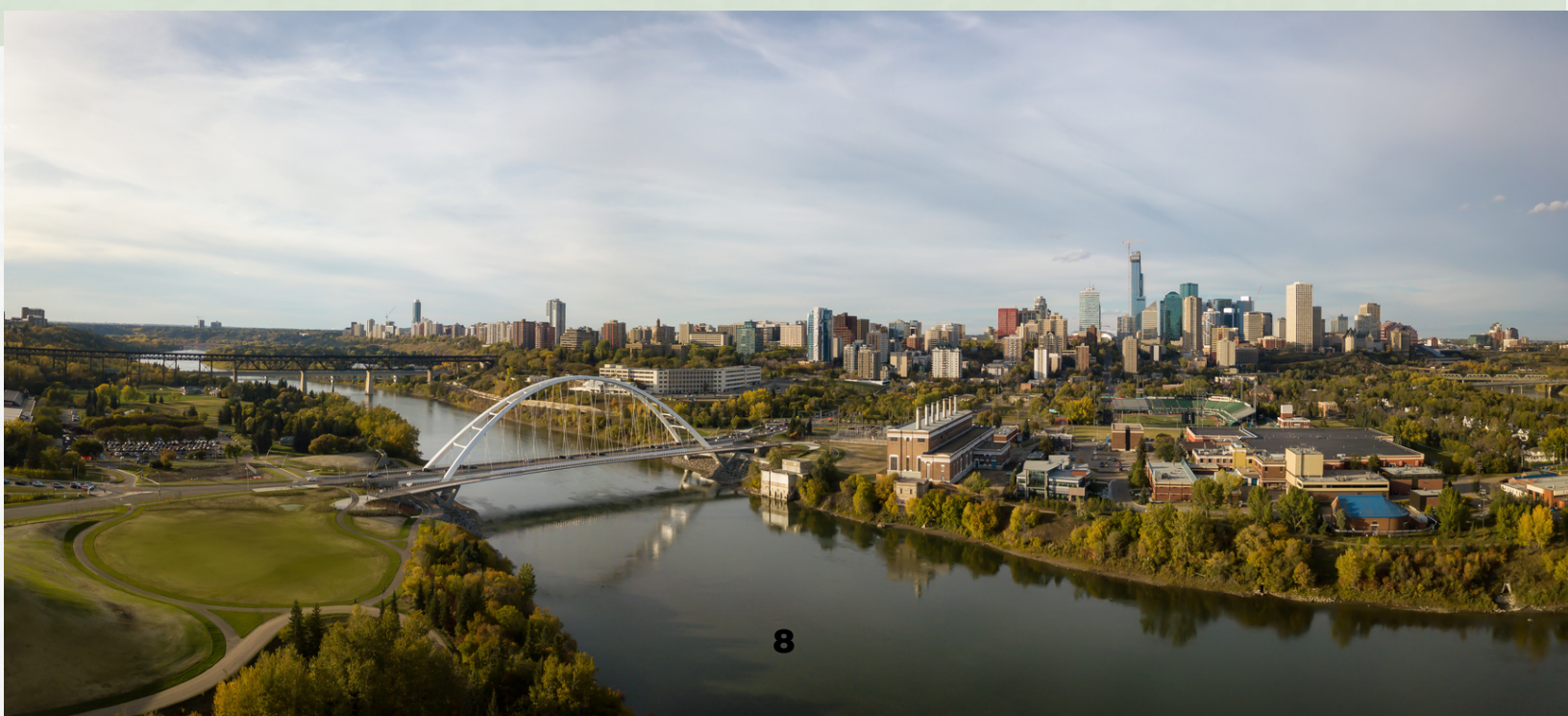
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Faculty of Nursing - Human Resources Wendy Dechant

BACKGROUND

In 2016, there were around 1.2 million Black people in Canada, including 100,245 Black youths ages 15 to 19. Alberta has the fastest-growing population of Black people in Canada. In 2016, there were 57,815 Black people in Edmonton, and the number is growing. Black youths experience social, economic, and health inequities in Canada, and are less likely to attain a post-secondary qualification. Among Black boys aged 13 to 17 in 2006, approximately half had a postsecondary qualification in 2016, compared to 62% of other boys; this statistic has been declining since 2011. Young Black males were nearly twice as likely as other young males to not be employed, attending school or completing job training. Attitudes of teachers towards Black youths, the lack of African-Canadian history and culture in the educational curriculum, systemic anti-Black racism, and the lack of mentors contribute to poor educational outcomes, which translate into poorer economic outcomes and overall less food and job security.

Black-focused education can improve the economic outcomes of Black youths. Furthermore, strong evidence indicates mentorship is effective across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of youth development. To address these challenges, the United Nations recommends Canada should “strengthen Afrocentric education curricula”. The Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program (BYMLP) at the University of Alberta addresses this recommendation.



Proponents of Afrocentric educational programs assert that Black youths suffer from low self-esteem, which leads to poor performance in school, but that they can be motivated toward high achievement by studying their history. Research also shows that alienation and expulsion rates decrease and self-esteem and university attendance rates increase when Black students are taught by Black teachers.

This project is focused on delivering a mentorship program for Black youths. The impetus of this program is based on data gathered by members of our team from Black parents, community leaders, and service providers in Edmonton. In 2016/2017, we completed a participatory action research project on parenting and mental health promotion of African children. We interviewed and completed focus groups with 75 stakeholders including parents, service providers, community leaders, and policymakers. Fourteen community leaders and 32 African parents identified that parents value respect, religion, and education.

However, their ability to instill their value of education in their children is limited by racism experienced by Black children, the lack of Black mentors, teachers often encouraging Black children to go into certificate or diploma programs rather than university degree programs, and bullying of Black children in schools.

Participants identified the need to capitalize on the strengths of the community, including successful Black professionals, and to create opportunities for mentorship. Upon completion of the research project, we held a stakeholder engagement day that was attended by over 150 stakeholders including members of the Black community, religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, professors, researchers, doctors, nurses, and other professionals.

The stakeholder engagement day emphasized the need to create mentorship opportunities for both parents and youths and also to capitalize on the resources within the community. With respect to improving Black child and youth well-being, African communities prioritized improving the economic outcomes of Black youths.

METHODS

A Steering Committee made up of Black faculty members and an Advisory Committee made up of community leaders and youths were set up. The Advisory Committee met two times to discuss the recruitment process and contribute to the development of the curriculum for the mentorship program. Twenty-three youths were selected to participate in the 2-month mentorship program, which took place from July 4 to August 26, 2022. The youths were selected via a competitive process based on a one-page essay explaining why they wanted to participate in the program, their high school transcript, and an application form. Thirty-four applications were received. A recruitment committee was created made up of the Project Coordinator, two members of the Advisory Committee, a graduate student, and a Research Assistant. The Research Assistant and the graduate student assessed the applications independently and assigned scores based on pre-designed evaluation criteria. The Project Coordinator then compared the resulting assessments and prioritized the applicants from most to least qualified. A final meeting was held with all three assessors and the Project Lead, Dr. Salami, for the final selection of candidates to be invited for interview. 30 candidates were invited for interviews and 23 were sent acceptance letters. A total of 23 mentees went through the program. Each youth was hired as a temporary full-time research assistant and was paid \$15.20 per hour. All 23 mentees graduated and received completion certificates.

The program involved attendance at workshops that were held on Mondays and Tuesdays during the 6-week summer program. Due to some mentees being based outside Edmonton, they could not attend workshops in person. To rectify this, blended sessions were created. Sessions were held simultaneously in person and online via Zoom. During the summer a total of four in-person workshops were held on Monday and Tuesday each week. Throughout the summer, students were required to meet with their mentors for one hour a week.

Before the start of the program, the BYMLP was approved by Edmonton Public School District for high school work experience credit. Youths who were interested applied through their respective schools and the Project Coordinator, in liaison with their school's Work Experience Coordinators, supported them to obtain high school credits for their participation.

To evaluate the program, a survey was administered to mentees on the first day of the mentorship program, halfway through the program, and in the final week of the mentorship program. Responses to survey questions were used to determine if the short- and medium-term objectives of the program were being met. The survey was also used to obtain feedback on aspects of the program that require improvement.



SUMMARY OF WORKSHOPS

WEEK 1 DAY 1 JULY 4TH 2022

ACTIVITY: ORIENTATION DAY AND OPENING CEREMONY

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Mr. David Shepherd
MLA for Edmonton-City Center

Dr. Helen Vallianatos
Associate Dean of Students

Dr. Bukola Salami
Founder of BYMLP, Mentor, Professor, Faculty of Nursing

Joseph Luri
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and South Sudanese Association

Dr. Linda Gorim
Mentor, Agricultural Science, Food Nutritionist

Alexis Andres
Mentor, Training Support Analyst, Faculty of Nursing, Academic Planning and Undergraduate Program

Dr. Shirley Anne Tate
Mentor, Professor of Canada Research Chair Tier 1 in Feminism and Intersectionality, Department of Sociology

Dr. W. Andy Knight
Mentor, Professor, Department of Political Science

Dr. Sedami Gnidehou
Mentor, Assistant Adjunct Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Dr. Jared Wesley
Mentor, Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts,

Allison Sivak
Librarian of Health Science

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

23 mentees (2 remotely).

SUMMARY

The BYMLP program began with an opening ceremony, 19 mentees and one volunteer attended in person while two mentees attended remotely. One of the mentees attending remotely lives within the province of Alberta while the other remote mentee lives in another province. This is evidence that the BYMLP program is able to consistently make accommodations for participants outside of the city.

The opening day of BYMLP gave mentors, professors, assistants, and mentees the opportunity to introduce themselves, their careers, and their future goals. Mentors explained why they chose to become a BYMLP mentor, and elaborated on how black teens can be successful in their chosen professions. Mentees had the opportunity to ask questions and develop a working relationship with their mentors. Several informative presentations were given on how to use essential platforms like E Class and Zoom. The last presentation of the day was given by Allison Sivak, who taught the students what a literature review is as well as how to do a literature search.



WEEK 1 DAY 2 JULY 5 2022

ACTIVITY: LIBRARY TOUR

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Milamem Gabber
Public Services Assistant

19 mentees

Peter Binkley
Digital Scholarship Technologies Librarian

Virginia Pow
Librarian

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

SUMMARY

The Program Coordinator, Research Assistant, and the 21 mentees were led through a guided tour of the University of Alberta's Cameron library by Milamem Gabber, Peter Binkley, and Virginia Pow.

The purpose of the tour was to familiarize the students with the physical building and the information resources available. The tour covered different levels of the library including the Digital Scholarship Center (DSC). The students learned about the different tools available to aid in their research, which research types correspond to which tools, and how to go about booking and accessing those spaces. At the end of the tour, time was given to allow the students to obtain a TAL (The Alberta Library) card for the purpose of borrowing books from the university library. A TAL Card enables students to walk into over 300 public, post-secondary, and government special libraries across the province, borrow material and return it to any participating library. The activities of the day concluded with the project coordinator conducting a check-in with the mentees, allowing them to ask questions and confirm that they have contacted their respective mentors.

WEEK 1 DAY 3, JULY 6 2022

ACTIVITY: WORKPLACE TRAINING (REMOTE)

Under the direction of the Program Coordinator and Research Assistant, the mentees were tasked with completing two Workplace Safety Training Modules: “Working safely at the U of A “ and “Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention”. As employees of the University of Alberta, it is critical that they are able to recognize and advocate for a safe and healthy work environment. With the tools gained from these training modules, mentees are able to confidently and safely navigate the diverse professional situations of their various projects.



CAREER PANEL

WEEK 2 DAY 7 JULY 11 2022

ACTIVITY: PROFESSIONAL CARRER PANEL

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Dr. Shirley Anne Tate
**Professor of Feminism and
intersectionality, Department
of political science**

Lisa Dublin
**MBA, MA, Optimum Success
Strategies**

Dr. Sandra Dixon
**Assistant Professor, University
in Lethbridge**

Uduak U Akpan
**BSc., M.Tech., M.Sc.General
Electric Hitachi (GEH) Nuclear
Energy, Senior Licensing
Engineer**

Dr. Ekuia Amponsah Agyemang
**MD, MPH, CRP, Senior Resident
physician, President of Black
Residents and Fellows of
Canada**

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

22 mentees (3 remotely)

Throughout the day, blended presentations (in person and via Zoom) were given on Tackling Racism (Prof. Shirley Anne Tate) and Leadership and Professionalism in academic pursuit (Lisa Dublin).



Both presentations focused on engaging the mentees and teaching them how to recognize and navigate racism, including possible solutions and steps to take in those situations. The mentees were taught not to let themselves be held back by underwhelming statistics and negative public perception, instead, they were instructed to pave a path of their own while maintaining professionalism and encouraged to become thought leaders in their respective fields.

The day concluded with Dr. Myra Kandemiri facilitating a Career Panel for Professionals (Dr. Ekuia Amponsah Agyemang, Uduak U Akpan, Dr. Sandra Dixon). The panelists expanded upon their career fields, the steps they took to get to their professional level, the difficulties they faced, and what inspired them to go into their line of work. The mentees had the opportunity to ask the panelists questions at the end of the formal question and answer session, which they took advantage of.



STUDENT PANEL

WEEK 2 DAY 8 JULY 12TH 2022

ACTIVITY: WORKSHOP 3

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Karen Pinkoski,
Student Services Advisor
Student Connect,
Office of the Registrar

Lindsay Moores
Needs-based Funding Expert
Student Financial Support Officer
Office of the Registrar

Lindsay Hennessey
B.A, Student Financial Support
Office of the Registrar

Mary Olukotun
Ph.D. Nursing Student
University of Alberta

Christian Fotang
Former Vice President External,
University of Alberta Students'
Union

Dr. Bukola Salami
Founder of BYMLP
Mentor
Professor, Faculty of Nursing

Oluwatobiloba Obatusin
Former President of the Black
Pharmacy Student Association
University of Alberta

Gift Okwa
Former Vice President;
Black Student Association,
University of Alberta,

Fisayo Aruleb
Former President of the Black
Medicine Students Association
University of Alberta

Lauren Kimoto
Student Recruiter,
Office of the Registrar
Student Recruitment Centre of
Expertise, National Recruitment;

Amber Henderson
Student Recruitment Center of
Expertise, College of Social
Sciences & Humanities

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

20 mentees (2 remotely).

Presentations were given on University admissions (Karen Pinkoski), awards, scholarships & financing (Lindsay Hennessey and Lindsay Moores), and University of Alberta Recruitment (Lauren Kimoto and Amber Henderson). In the university admissions presentation, each mentee received a bag from the U of A with badges, a guidebook full of program information, and general U of A resources for current and prospective students. Karen explained the contents of the guidebook in detail and answered various questions from mentees. Lindsay M and Lindsay H spoke to the mentees about finance management in university, budgeting, and residence costs. They concluded the presentation by providing multiple resources for the students to learn about personal finance, budgeting, and increasing financial literacy. After lunch, Dr. Myra Kandemiri facilitated a Career Panel for Students (Gift Okwa, Mary Olukotun, Fisayo Aruleb, and Christian Fotang).

The five students talked to the students about their academic journey, their career goals, life experiences, stories, and their strategies for success. Mentees asked interesting questions about university life, how they can afford university and how to navigate applying for a degree that is in line with their future professional goals.



WEEK 4 DAY 16 JULY 25TH 2022

ACTIVITY: WORKSHOP 4

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Dr. Jennifer Kelly
**Professor Emeritus, Faculty of
Education, Educational Policy
Studies**

Stenette Van Den Berg
**University of Alberta Writing
Center**

Dr. W. Andy Knight
**Ph.D., FRSC, Professor,
Department of Political Science**

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

23 mentees (2 remotely).

SUMMARY

The day started with a presentation given by Dr. Jennifer Kelly on the subject of Black Canadian History, informing the mentees of the relatively unknown history of Black Canadians. For example, the history of how and why Black Canadians migrated to Canada. Dr. Kelly explained to the mentees the discrimination many black immigrants faced as they fled the southern United States (US) and sought asylum in Canada. The Canadian border patrol had various methods of ensuring that only immigrants entering Canada were white. Following this, the mentees were given the opportunity to practice their analytic and collaborative skills by working in groups of 4 to dissect and discuss the main themes in a political cartoon on the topics explored by Dr. Kelly. Next, a presentation was given by Stenette Van Den Berg from the University of Alberta (U of A) writing center, who spoke to the mentees on various ways to improve their academic writing. The workshop included sharing writing tips and strategies that students could implement as they worked on their individual research projects. She also highlighted the numerous writing workshops and resources provided by the University of Alberta. This was followed by an address to the mentees by Professor Andy Knight, on the topic of Black Excellence and Leadership. He shared with the mentees the importance of cultivating leadership qualities and the role they could have in their lives. Professor Knight also shared some of his personal experiences and accomplishments in his career as a political scientist, from meeting the Cabinet ministers in Saudi Arabia to his work with UNICEF. The day concluded with a revisit from Stenette Van Den Berg, who gave a detailed presentation on literature reviews and led students through creating a literature review of their own.

WEEK 6 DAY 36 AUGUST 8TH

ACTIVITY: PROFESSIONALISM, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND BUDGETING

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Lisa Dublin
MBA, MA,

Brian Wong
**Royal Bank of Canada
RBC On Campus Assistant
Branch
Royal Bank of Canada**

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

23 mentees (2 remotely).





SUMMARY

All the presentations of the day were focused on learning and practicing skills that are transferable to various academic, professional, and personal environments. Lisa Dublin led an interactive workshop on the ways to achieve professionalism and ways to deal with conflict in a professional environment. The mentees were given different work conflict scenarios and were tasked with brainstorming ways to address the conflict using the methods and solutions taught in the workshop. Thereafter, Lisa Dublin guided the mentees on public speaking, where they were given tips on how to become better speakers, such as knowing your audience, intriguing the audience, having the belief that the crowd wants to see you succeed, and making sure to avoid the use of filler words when presenting. The presentation concluded with mentees giving a three minute presentation on a topic of their choosing in order to practice the techniques learned. After lunch, the students were taught the importance of budgeting by Brian Wong, topics included how to budget using saving accounts and RBC apps like NOMI insight. The mentees were given the opportunity after the presentation to ask questions related to finances and investing. The students asked insightful questions about the difference between debit and credit cards, what credit sources are, how to improve your credit score, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of owning a credit card. The day concluded with a tour of the University of Alberta North Campus led by members of the Student Services Center. Students learned about the historic significance of some of the buildings at the University of Alberta.

WEEK 7 DAY 44 AUGUST 15TH

ACTIVITY: FINAL PRESENTATIONS AND GRADUATION CEREMONY

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Mary Etem Mbiatem
**Registered Psychologist,
Ph.D. Student, Department of
Education**

Dr. Maroro Zinyemba
**Dean, Faculty of Skills and
Foundational Learning
NorQuest College**

Dr. Bukola Salami
**Founder of BYMLP
Mentor, Professor
Faculty of Nursing**

Dr. Myra Kandemiri
Program Coordinator

Oluwakanyinsola Bello
Research Assistant

23 mentees (2 remotely)

[Various Parents, Family Members, and
Mentors.



SUMMARY

The graduation day of the BYMLP started with project coordinator Dr. Myra Kandemiri welcoming the attendees (in person and online), she gave a brief introduction to the program and the day's agenda. This was followed by a presentation by Registered Psychologist Mary Etek Mbiatem who talked to the mentees about Promoting Mental Health for Black Youths, during this lesson they actively participated in various exercises, such as breathing patterns and imaginative stories to help the mentees better themselves.



This followed with an address from Mary to the mentees on different ways they felt some stigma around mental health for Black youths, some of these answers included mentions of peer pressure, parental influence, and fear of judgment. After the morning presentation, our founder Prof. Bukola addressed the mentees. She offered congratulations to the students on their completion of the program, hoping the program had a positive impact on their lives and as well wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavors. After that, the presentations began, with each mentee coming up either as individuals or in groups to present the research assignment their mentors had assigned to them.



Several mentors arrived in person and joined via Zoom to watch their mentees' presentations. To conclude the day Dr. Maroro Zinyemba shared with the mentees the importance of this program, making them aware of the value having mentorship in the community could have on a young person. Dr. Maroro closed with some words of encouragement, inspiring the mentees to go into the world with a mindset of changing it. The day finished with the graduation ceremony, where the mentees walked across the front of the room to receive their certificate of completion and had a picture taken with Mentor Dr. Maroro Zinyemba and Founder Professor Bukola Salami.



POST- PROGRAM EVALUATION ANALYSIS

EVALUATION COMPLETION

The students completed evaluations at three key points of the program. At the beginning of the program before workshops had started, at the midterm evaluation point, and in the last week of the program. The completion rate of the program evaluation surveys stayed at a steady 96% as we implemented a reminder schedule and followed up with all mentees.

EDUCATION

At the beginning of the BYLMP program, 77% of youths reported confidence that they would go to university. By the end of the program, this proportion had increased to 100%. Similarly, the proportion of youths who were confident that they would be accepted into university increased from 90% at the beginning, to 100% at the end of the program.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

When asked at the beginning of the program about their level of confidence in overcoming challenges, 52% of the youths agreed that they were confident. At the end of the program, the proportion of youth who responded that they were confident they could overcome challenges had increased to 87%.

INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM

The proportion of youths who reported that they felt good about themselves when compared with others increased from 38% at the beginning of the mentorship program to 54% at the end.

CONFIDENCE

There was an increase in the level of efficacy of the youth. At the beginning of the program, 76% of the youths reported that they could be role models for other black youths. By the end of the BYLMP, this proportion had increased to 86%. Similarly, the proportion of youths who reported that they were likely to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in academics increased from 76% at the beginning of the program to 91% at the end of the program. Additionally, the proportion of youth who reported that they were confident in succeeding at almost any endeavor to which they set their minds increased from 81% at the beginning of the program to 100%

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

There is an increase in the level of participants' career aspirations. At the beginning of the program, 52% of the participants reported that they were likely to become leaders in their chosen career fields. By the end of the program, this proportion increased to 77%. Similarly, the proportion of youths who reported that they were likely to devote energy to getting promoted to a leadership position in the organization where they choose to work increased from 67% at the beginning of the program to 86% at the end.

The proportion of youths who reported that they were confident they will become one the best in their field increased from 91% at the beginning to 100% at the end of the program. The proportion of participants who indicated that they will become leaders in their field also increased from the beginning of the program from 48% to 76% at the end of the program. Also, there was a significant increase in the proportion of youths who indicated that being outstanding in their work is important to them, from 48% at the beginning of the program to 100% at the end of the program.

GENERAL EVALUATION

In general, 100% of the participants reported that the program has positively impacted their lives in general.

EVALUATION OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We tracked the number of youths who applied to our mentorship program, the number who participated in our mentorship program, the attendance rate of youths in workshops, and the number of youths who indicated satisfaction with our mentorship program. We also evaluated other key indicators of success for our program. The evaluation of key indicators of the success of this mentorship program is summarized below:

1. Indicator: Achieve an 80% attendance rate in the mentorship program, above 80% attendance rate at each workshop, and above 80% completion rate for mentees.

Evaluation: A total of 35 youths applied to our program, 23 were admitted and all 23 took up the offer. There was an average of 22 youths in attendance at each workshop. We had a 100% completion rate, with all 23 youths attending the graduation ceremony and receiving completion certificates.

2. Indicator: Youths' were surveyed on their confidence in starting and finishing university before and at the end of the program; a pre-and post-test measure of changes in knowledge (e.g., related to financing education, thriving in university, and leadership). Indicators of success include a 10% increase in confidence to start and finish university, and a 30% increase in knowledge related to entering and succeeding in university.

Evaluation: The mentorship program increased the youths' confidence in starting and/ or finishing University by an average of 23%

3. **Indicator:** The number of youths who begin university (collected one year and two years after program completion) and the number of youths who complete university (collected five years after program completion). Indicators of success include 80% of youths beginning university and 70% completing university.

Evaluation: This outcome will be measured one, two, and five years after this program

COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The BYMLP 2022 involved Black youths from Edmonton, Fort McMurray and Ontario. Feedback provided by mentees and project personnel on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in a future program is summarized below.

STRENGTHS

1. After COVID-19 restrictions on social gatherings were lifted, the organizers were able to facilitate blended in-person/online workshops for mentees throughout the entire program. Mentees expressed that they enjoyed meeting with and collaborating with one another regularly.
2. The opportunity for youths to network with professionals/professors who had similar ethnic backgrounds was very empowering for mentees.
3. The youths acquired skills that will help them prepare for university and beyond, including literature review, research, critical thinking, group engagement, resume writing, and self-confidence.
4. The program improved youths' cultural identity
5. The program contributed to a stronger sense of community, friendship, and community belonging among Black youth
6. Youth positively contributed to scientific knowledge and discourse through their research and presentations

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Getting the youths online to interact with presenters and each other in the online environment was difficult. Many youths tended to be passive in the main sessions, though small mixed group work sessions and a shared study space encouraged them to open up and bond with one another. In the future, more time should be allocated for discussions, and interactive elements like quizzes, polls, and presentations should be incorporated into more sessions.

2. Some youths had additional challenges including health issues, being newcomers to Canada, and having unique family environments. We provided constant access to university computers and a quiet space to work for all youths during the program.

3. The Youth expressed the need for more opportunities to collaborate and build strong community bonds with their peers. Furthermore, there were fewer bonding opportunities between online and in-person mentees when compared to Edmonton-based mentees. Office hours were created for students to drop in to work together on their research. In the future, a designated classroom available during working hours would be better suited to the social and collaborative needs of the mentees

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Following the completion of the program and final evaluation, The mentees were asked to make recommendations for improving the program for future cohorts, their recommendations are as follows:

- To improve mentees' confidence and communication skills, they should be given more independent and group tasks and encouraged to speak more during sessions.
- The program should integrate more activities including recreational and sports activities as a way of promoting increased engagement among mentees.
- Provide opportunities for mentees to work directly with mentors.
- There should be more activities besides from workshops. Some of these activities should take place within the University campus to give mentees the opportunity for increased interactions with their mentors who will share their personal experiences that will be useful for mentees' career choices and professional development.
- The program should provide funding or a means of transportation for participants.
- Increase the number of mentees and larger groups, creating specific career panels to help mentees gain more knowledge about their specific career of interest.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this program helped in improving the cultural identity of Black youth. Many mentees reported that the opportunity to network with successful professionals with similar ethnic roots was an experience that has helped in boosting their self-confidence. This year's program ended with an improved sense of identity and community belonging among mentees. The majority of the mentees expressed that they would recommend the program to their friends and family.

